

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter to the Editor, Re: Nylaende M, Abdelnoor M, Stranden E, Morken B, Sandbaek G, Risum O, et al. The Oslo Balloon Angioplasty versus Conservative Treatment Study (OBACT)-The 2-years Results of a Single Centre, Prospective, Randomised Study in Patients with Intermittent Claudication. Eur J Vasc Endovasc Surg. 2007;33:3–12

The OBACT study addresses an important question. In this study statins were prescribed only when total cholesterol was >5 and/or LDL was >3 . In the studies quoted by the authors and in other studies, statins reduced the risk of events regardless of the initial cholesterol level, and should therefore be offered at lower cholesterol levels. The validity of the paper by Singh (reference 30) is unresolved and should not be used as evidence of the benefits of Mediterranean diet.^{1–3} Aspirin and esomeprazole have been shown to be superior to clopidogrel in the prevention of recurrent ulcer bleeding.⁴

Iliac PTA has been shown to provide long-term benefit in a high percentage of patients at low treatment risk, whereas only short lasting benefit has been shown from femoropopliteal PTA. In the OBACT study neither the distribution of iliac and femoropopliteal obstructions between the groups, nor the number of PTAs at the iliac and femoropopliteal level have been reported. The benefit of PTA shown in secondary endpoints could have been due to the iliac PTAs only, irrespective of any effects of the femoropopliteal PTAs. The remaining question, whether femoropopliteal PTA is beneficial has therefore not been answered in this study.

Although no significant differences between the groups were seen with regard to compliance to OMT, numbers are not given and may have differed sufficiently to affect the results. Results could also have

been affected by the four patients lost to follow-up in the OMT group, given the low number of patients.

It is not clear from the description whether the t-test and the Mann-Whitney test were used to compare measures at particular times or whether the paired t-test or paired Wilcoxon's test for repeated measures were used to compare differences between measures at baseline and at particular times.

In the OBACT study reference 31 is incorrectly quoted as proof that low-dose aspirin prevents stroke and myocardial infarction in patients with PAD. References 1,7,9,13,15,17–19,21,24,25,31,32,34,38, and 40–42 contain errors in relation to author names. The title of reference 28 has been abbreviated. Reference 37 was published in print in 2006. These errors somewhat complicate retrieval of the references.

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- 4 CHAN FK, CHING JY, HUNG LC, WONG VW, LEUNG VK, KUNG NN *et al.* Clopidogrel versus aspirin and esomeprazole to prevent recurrent ulcer bleeding. *N Engl J Med* 2005;**352**:238–244.

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